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AUTHOR Flynn, Meredith, Comp.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to familiarize counselors with the use of the Student Profile as a tool for placing students in cooperative vocational education programs in New Jersey. (The Student Profile, a two-page form, was developed to assist in the process of obtaining information from students' permanent records for the purpose of placing cooperative industrial education students in jobs.) Described in the handbook are the sections of the profile that deal with the following areas: vocational interests, aptitudes, achievement, and work attitudes. A copy of the Student Profile concludes the guide. (MN)

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A GUIDE FOR USING THE STUDENT PROFILE FOR PLACEMENT IN COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

New Jersey State Department of Education
Division of Vocational Education

Bureau of Special Programs and
Bureau of Occupational Programs

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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This information was compiled by Meredith Flynn, Director of Student Personnel, Gloucester County Vocational-Technical School, Sewell, New Jersey and edited by Patricia Peacock, School-to-Work Linkage Project Manager, Shirley Morton, Director of Vocational Guidance and Counseling, and Ann DeAngelo, Supervisor of Vocational Guidance and Counseling.

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Charles Kunkel
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Gloucester County Vocational/Technical School

Justin Jackson
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Atlantic County Vocational/Technical School

Joan Van Note
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Buena Regional High School

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INTRODUCTION

A recent study commissioned by Sentry Insurance reveals that because of a recession-caused decline in the number of recent apprentices and trainees and because of the lengthy training periods required, "the supply of skilled employees...will almost surely be inadequate." The study was designed to test the need for skilled employees in precision metalworking, both now and in the future. Employers in the study say they think they would want to hire 36,000 more skilled employees than they could find if business improves. Twenty-five percent of the employers also stated that their most serious problem in the next five years will be "finding skilled, qualified employees" and "shortage of labor."

(reprinted from Career News Digest. National Association of Trade & Technical Schools, Washington, D.C., January, 1983.)

As professionals in the educational community, we must be aware of the need for skilled workers in the trades and technologies. We must be able to advise students and assist them in their career development process through existing cooperative vocational education programs as well as the School-to-Work Linkage Program.

A wealth of information is already available in the students' permanent records concerning their career potential. We have but to access this information, order it, interpret it, and synthesize our findings with the student as part of the self-awareness aspect of the career development process.

The Student Profile has been developed to assist in the process of accessing information from the students' permanent records. All of the information on the Profile may not be available in each school, but counselors should utilize what is there.

This Guide has been developed to assist counselor's in the use of the Profile in the career counseling process. It will provide suggestions for obtaining additional information about students.

This Guide, combined with the Counselor's Guide to Apprenticeship Training, should provide the tools and information necessary to assist students in acquiring employment commensurate with their interests and abilities, including apprenticeships in the trades and technologies. The Counselor's Guide to Apprenticeship Training is available through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) in both microfiche and printed form. The Eric Document (ED) number will be found in the Resources In Education (RIE) Index for 1983 under the subject heading, "Apprenticeships." Contact your state colleges and university libraries for further information on how to secure a microfiche or paper copy of the document. The ED number will retrieve not only the document but also the abstract from the RIE Abstract Indexes.

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Career & Vocational Education offers a toll free number for information on the ERIC system. The Clearinghouse is located at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, phone number (800-848-4815).

WHEN TO USE THE PROFILE

The Profile was originally designed to assist Cooperative Industrial Education (C.I.E.) Coordinators in the job placement of their students. It focuses on jobs that maximize the student's potential and eventually lead to apprenticeships. All cooperative vocational education coordinators and guidance counselors are encouraged to use the Profile in the career counseling process in general.

HOW TO USE THE PROFILE

The Student Profile has been designed to give the professional "cues or insights," into a student's career potential through systematic use of the information contained in the permanent records. No one piece of information on the Profile is crucial or definitive; but, put together and combined with a knowledge of the world of work, it can assist counselors in providing meaningful career counseling and job placement for a student.

The information on the Profile can be separated into four (4) basic categories:

-Vocational Interests (either measured or simply stated by the student or parents)
-Aptitude
-Achievement
-Work Attitudes

So that the Profile's potential may be understood, the information on the form will be outlined and described as it is categorized.

Vocational Interests

If someone enjoys his/her job, finds it interesting and challenging, worker satisfaction is improved and productivity is increased. Often problems arise on a job or with a cooperative vocational education placement when the student lacks interest in the job or finds it unrewarding; consequently, it is important to determine what a student is interested in doing. Since most students' exposure to the world of work is limited, they are not fully aware of the types of jobs they might find interesting. Ideally, an interest inventory such as Career Awareness, Harrington-O'Shea or Strong Vocational would be a good vehicle to identify those types of occupations for which the student shows an interest. If the school's testing schedule or budget does not allow for this type of testing, there are some additional sources of interest assessment which may be investigated.

The Boy Scouts of America, through their Explorer Program, have a brief interest survey which they use with their careers posts. Check with the regional Boy Scouts Coordinator or your County Superintendent of Schools to see if this service may be available to your school.

The U.S. Department of Labor, through the Employment & Training Administration, United States Employment Service, has developed an Interest Check List. This counseling tool, easily administered and interpreted, provides the students and the professional with areas of career interest. The Interest Check List is designed for use with the Dictionary of Occupational Titles and the Guide for Occupational Exploration. Both of these books as well as the Interest Check List and Instructions for Administering and Using the Interest Check List may be purchased from:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

The cost for both is nominal, considering the usefulness of the tool. When ordering, the following stock numbers should be used:

Interest Check List SN 029-013-00093-4	Cost $6.50/100
Instructions for Administering & Using the Interest Check List	Cost $5.00/100

Other indicators in determining a student's occupational interests are provided on the Profile as well. Parents are the strongest influence on a young person making a career choice. If the parent(s) find his/her own job rewarding and significant for potential advancement, it is certain that this will be communicated to the child in a favorable manner. Parents may also guide their children away from their chosen occupations and into what they consider to be "more desirable" employment, especially if they are unhappy or feel their job is unfulfilling. Knowing the parents' occupations may be helpful in understanding why a student is interested or not interested in a particular career. It may also be helpful for the cooperative vocational education coordinator in locating work stations for students.

The final interest indicator on the Profile is the career which the student says he/she wishes to pursue. When completing the Profile, ask the student in what career he/she is interested. The responses will indicate why the particular career was selected, what he/she likes or dislikes about it, whether this has been a well-thought out decision or a haphazard one.

The student who says he/she has no career goal is the one who really needs career counseling. Career immaturity could be a result of a lack of exposure to the world of work, a low self-concept, an inability to communicate one's feelings and aspirations adequately, or one of many other reasons. If this is the type of response a student gives, the information on the rest of the Profile may be used to "play detective" and help the student find his/her particular career potential.

Aptitudes

It goes without saying that interest alone in a particular occupation does not necessarily guarantee success. It is equally important that someone possess an aptitude for the occupation as well. With the technical nature of most occupations in today's electronic computerized society it is no longer sufficient that an "eager" or "strong" person will find job success.

Communication and computation skills are basic to all types of work, whether a cashier in a grocery store, a landscaper, a clerk-typist, or an auto mechanic. Consequently, the scores obtained on standardized academic aptitude tests are important indicators in career selection as well as career success. A student reading on a sixth grade level is perhaps being unrealistic in aspiring to work as a legal secretary or medical technician without first taking remedial courses to improve his/her reading skills. The student who is unable to convert fractions to decimals would have problems working as a bank teller or machinist.

Make it a point to review the student's most recent standardized academic aptitude test scores. Be sure the format in which the scores are reported, such as grade equivalents, stanines or percentiles, is clearly explained. A testing coordinator or another guidance counselor in the school or district may be able to provide additional professional interpretation. Testing concepts such as "mean", "median" and "standard deviation" are an integral part of interpreting test scores. The most important thing to remember when interpreting test scores, however, is that these are but one indicator of the student's career or academic potential, and as such, should not be used exclusively to predict a student's potential for occupational success.

Perhaps the district may administer or have available a vocational aptitude test. If so, this will provide an excellent indicator of a student's occupational potential. When this information is cross-referenced or matrixed with vocational interest test results, the counselor has some solid, positive information with which to counsel a student.

Unfortunately, this type of testing is not usually a part of a high school's testing program or budget. As with interest testing, however, there are community resources available that can provide vocational aptitude testing for students.

The first such source, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, (ASVAB), is a group of twelve (12) tests that measures an individual's aptitude in five (5) separate career fields. These are Verbal, Analytical/ Quantitative, Clerical, Mechanical and Trade/Technical as well as Academic Ability. The ASVAB is designed as a predictor of success in military training schools; however, with the use of the Counselor's Guide to the ASVAB (available from the recruiter) the results may be utilized to predict success in civilian occupations as well.

An armed services recruiter may be invited to come into your school to administer the ASVAB test. Counselors, students, and the military will receive a copy of the test results. Although these test results may be used for recruitment, a student who takes the ASVAB is under no obligation to the military in any way. If the recruiter becomes "overzealous" in pursuing the students, recruiters from other branches of the armed services should be contacted to find one who is more in tune with the district's philosophy and intentions.

Another potential source of vocational aptitude testing is the local Job Service Office, New Jersey Department of Labor, which administers the General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) and the Non-Verbal Aptitude Test Battery (NATB), which are similar to the ASVAB but relate to Occupational Aptitude Patterns (OAP's) found in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (the DOT). It will be worthwhile to establish contact with the local Job Service manager for mutual sharing of problems and solutions. Check with the community college to see if they have career centers that will provide vocational aptitude and interest testing. A fourth potential source of vocational aptitude testing, which is limited to handicapped and/or classified special education students is available through the local office of the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DVR or "Rehab" can provide not only vocational testing but counseling services, specialized training costs, and devices that will

enable a handicapped person to be successful on the job. DVR is very anxious to establish a good working relationship with schools since a common goal is shared and can be mutually beneficial. It would definitely be advantageous to make a contact with the DVR. Most offices have a counselor designated to serve as the liaison with schools.

When interpreting vocational aptitude test results the scores are frequently reported by career clusters. Looking at a group of careers for which a student might be suited, will aid in career counseling and job placement. It is equally as important and valid to review career clusters on both ends of the continuum.

Achievement

A number of achievement indicators are provided on the Profile. After all, it is as important to know what a student knows as well as his/her potential and interests. If an electronics job requiring basic algebra skills is sought, it is not sufficient that a student have the aptitude and interest in electronics, but that he/she have basic algebra skills!

The listing of English grades give an indicator of the student's communication skills. Service occupations such as receptionist, dental assistant, cashier, nursery worker, or TV service technician require good oral as well as written communications skills. All jobs require that a neat, correctly filled out application and in some cases, a resume must be submitted and a positive interview completed. Indicators of these types of communications skills can be drawn from English grades.

The same philosophy holds true for computation skills. Employment in the skilled trades require a solid foundation in basic mathematical functions, including fractions and decimals. Any occupation that is related to electricity or electronics would be enhanced by a knowledge of mathematics, especially advanced algebra.

Jobs involving blueprints or schematics would be enhanced by a knowledge of geometry. The types of math courses taken and the grades received should give you an additional indicator of occupational success for a student.

The listing of additional related vocational courses taken also provides cues concerning a student's occupational potential. Not only will this listing give an indication of the student's skills development, but also of his/her interests as well. Through talking with the teachers of these disciplines a counselor will be able to gain a sense of the student's work attitude, safety consciousness and readiness for entering the world of work. Instructors might complete an occupational recommendations checklist so this information may later be referred to in career counseling sessions and during job placement.

Work Attitudes

The remaining information on the Profile is related to work attitudes. Comments in a recent Occupational Outlook Quarterly published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, reflected on student worker success in cooperative vocational education programs. Employer-reported dissatisfaction with the students was generally a result of

poor work attitudes rather than a lack of skill or potential. Work attitudes include such things as punctuality, attendance, safety consciousness, responsibility, cooperation with supervisors and co-workers, loyalty and honesty.

Punctuality is a very important habit that seems to be established in high school as students develop a sense of independence. If a poor and habitual tardiness or absenteeism trend develops while in high school, this becomes very difficult to break when the student enters the work force. All too often this results in the unpleasant experience of being fired repeatedly unless the lesson is learned and the habit is changed.

When reviewing attendance records, counselors should look for patterns or changes. If one year was particularly poor, question the student and/or parents about it. Perhaps there was a problem of which the counselor should be aware. The student must be informed with the need for punctuality and responsibility on the job, so as to potentially influence his/her behavior and attitudes in the future.

Knowing whether or not a young person is economically disadvantaged, handicapped, or a classified special education student will not only help identify the type of cooperative vocational education program he/she will be most suited for, but it could also be helpful in identifying outside agencies such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation discussed earlier or the Employment and Training Administration which could assist in training and job placement. This type of information can also be helpful with work attitudes such as motivation, cooperation with supervisors and co-workers, and safety.

Working with students with special problems requires a good understanding of their potential as well as their limitations. A sensitivity to their needs, and a strong desire to assist them in developing the skills to become productive citizens and workers is essential for counselors and cooperative vocational education. The involvement of the Child Study Team and the family is essential in this process in order to plan appropriately a course of action that will maximize the student's potential for success.

Identifying potentially restrictive physical conditions is very important in the career counseling and job placement process. All too often students, in their youthful enthusiasm, tend to take lightly physical conditions that could hinder or block their career goals. The student who is color blind will experience great difficulty in any electrical-related occupation since color coding of wires is used universally. The young person with asthma or other respiratory problems should avoid occupations that involve dust or fumes, such as welding or auto body. The student with pollen allergies would experience much discomfort in many agricultural occupations. The student with back problems could potentially aggravate his/her condition in an occupation that requires heavy lifting such as a stock clerk or farmer. Students should be counseled or consider these types of physical limitations when career planning.

Lastly, the goal of any professional involved in career counseling and job placement should be planning for the future by focusing upon the need for satisfaction and upward mobility on the job. In today's economy and changing technology, it is essential that a young person understand and accept the need for continuous education, either through formalized instruction or personal

study. The student's plans for post-secondary education should be part of his/her career planning and job placement process.

For a young person who wishes to pursue a career in the skilled trades or technologies, apprentice training is an excellent vehicle for insuring upward mobility through on-the-job training and formalized related instruction. This process may be initiated while the student is still in high school and enrolled in a cooperative vocational education program through the School-to-Work Linkage program. Refer to the Counselor's Guide to Apprenticeship Training or for further information concerning apprenticeship or the Linkage program, contact your county's Apprentice Coordinator.

CONCLUSION

The average American works 40 to 50 years of his/her life. This statement alone emphasizes the need for career counseling as well as sound foundation for job placement through cooperative vocational education programs. As educators we have a responsibility to assist students not only in familiarizing themselves with the world of work but also acquiring a knowledge of self and personal career potential. The information contained in the student's permanent records can be invaluable in assisting in this process. Use of this Profile should facilitate assistance to students in their career development process.

STUDENT PROFILE FOR PLACEMENT IN

_____ CAE	_____ CIE II	_____ CHE	_____ COE
_____ CIE I	_____ CIE III	_____ CHO	_____ MDE

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____ Grade _____

Absenteeism/Tardiness:
Grade 9 _____/_____ Grade 11 _____/_____
Grade 10 _____/_____ Grade 12 _____/_____

Handicapped? _____ Classification: _____
Economically Disadvantaged? _____

Parent/Guardian:

Mother's Name _____

Place of Employment _____

Father's Name _____

Place of Employment _____

Has Co-op Placement been discussed with parents? _____

Comment: _____

Academic Coursework:
English Grades: 9 _____ 10 _____ 11 _____ 12 _____

Math Courses & Grades:

_____ _____

_____ _____

Additional related vocational courses & grades (i.e. business, vocational):

Year _____ Course _____ Grade _____

Year _____ Course _____ Grade _____

Year _____ Course _____ Grade _____

Year _____ Course _____ Grade _____

Year _____ Course _____ Grade _____

Potentially Restrictive Physical Conditions (ie: asthma, color blindness, etc.)

_____

Standardized Achievement Test Scores:

Year _____ Test _____ Scores _____

Year _____ Test _____ Scores _____

Year _____ Test _____ Scores _____

Standardized Aptitude Test Scores:

Year _____ Test _____ Scores _____

Year _____ Test _____ Scores _____

Year _____ Test _____ Scores _____

Interest Inventories:

Year _____ Test _____ Careers/Clusters of high interest _____

_____

Careers/Clusters of low interest _____

_____

Vocational Aptitude Testing Scores:

Year _____ Test _____ Careers/Clusters of high aptitude:

Careers/Clusters of low aptitude _____

_____ _____

_____

Student's stated plans for further post-secondary education: _____

_____

Does the student wish to pursue apprenticeship training? _____ Yes _____ No

_____ _____

Date of Interview Counselor's Signature

_____ _____

Parent's Signature Student's Signature

_____

Co-op Coordinator's Signature